

Support Broker Examples

What does a support broker do?

1. **LISTEN:** They listen to people with developmental disabilities and help them get the support they need to go after the life they want.
2. **LIFE FOCUSED:** They focus on supporting the life the individual wants, and not on filling slots in existing services. They explore all potential resources and choices in their community that could help the individual. When the needed support does not exist they work to develop it.
3. **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:** They focus on facilitating and building relationships which are the strongest and most reliable forms of supports regardless of funding. They build community, and help communities to see the benefits and opportunities that come from including people with developmental disabilities.
4. **ANSWER:** They answer to the individual and the individual decides if they are doing a good job or not.
5. **EFFECTIVE:** They should work themselves out of a job, and step back when supports are in place.
6. **SPECIALIZE:** This does not need to be their main job. They may support only in a certain area because of specialized skills or knowledge. (For example, real estate agent helping find a place to live, or a business manager helping find a job opening).

Who Makes a Good Support Broker?

According to Ellen Cummings at the Center for Self-Determination:

- Has a strong sense of social justice
- Is committed to an understanding of self-determination, freedom, and human and civil rights
- Has the ability to develop close relationships to those who receive support and all those who are important in that person's life
- Is a clear, concise communicator and facilitator
- Believes in the value of every human life
- Understands through personal experience the nature of human relationships
- Has the courage to take a stand on behalf of the person supported
- Has respect for the cultural values of others
- Is willing to transfer control
- Has authority and power in the system on behalf of those receiving support
- Is optimistic and has a pervading sense of joy
- Has common sense
- Has a sense of humor
- Can work well despite ambiguity

Support Broker examples from other States:

Dane County, Wisconsin - Support Broker

(One of the pilot areas in consumer direction, and where term support broker comes from.)

- The support broker is responsible for assisting with the development and implementation of the person's plan.
- The consumer chooses the support broker.
- The support broker's responsibilities are:
 - Helping identify the individual's goals.
 - Developing individualized support plans. Plans include how the individual wants to live, and also those elements of an individual's life that are non-negotiable (those things that cannot be compromised).
 - Identifying informal and generic supports as well as traditional human service agencies.
 - Helping to choose supports that fulfill the goals of the individualized plan.
 - Using the allocated budget creatively.
 - Negotiating rates and contracting for services with the chosen providers.
 - Monitoring the supports for quality on an ongoing basis.
- People selecting support brokers **CANNOT**:
 - Select a broker employed by one of their current support agencies
 - Hire their broker to provide other types of support
 - Choose their guardian or legal representative to act as their broker
- **MINIMALLY** brokers must assure that:
 - A person receives necessary health and dental care
 - A person is living in safe decent conditions
 - A person's money is being appropriately managed
 - All workers are adequately trained and aware of the person's support needs
 - The person is receiving adequate support to maintain health and safety
 - If one or more of these conditions are not met, the broker must be actively involved in trying to assure that they are met

Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL) - Peer Mentoring

ABIL believes that mentors should be volunteers for several reasons. They believe it means more to the mentee if their mentor is someone who really wants to be with them. They also believe that mentors need to be available to the mentee evenings and weekends. Finally, they want the relationship to be a natural extension of the community where friends help friends without expecting to be paid for it.

Peer Mentors are individuals with disabilities who:

- are already living independently
- are integrated into their community
- have a desire to help others do the same

Peer Mentors are not, nor do they try to be, medical professionals. They offer guidance through the maze of services. They are people who:

- have "been there"
- can be called after business hours
- offer friendship and encouragement
- are eager to listen
- have hard earned wisdom
- are willing to confront bureaucracy (advocate for system change)

MEDICAID WAIVER APPROVED DEFINITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Missouri - Community Specialist Services

The services of the community specialist will assist the consumer and his caregivers to design and implement specialized programs to enhance self-direction, independent living skills, community integration, social, leisure and recreational skills, and behavior management. A community specialist with expertise in person-centered planning may also be selected by the consumer to facilitate the interdisciplinary planning team meeting.

Responsibilities include:

- professional observation and assessment
- individualized program design and implementation
- training of consumers and family members
- consultation with caregivers and other agencies
- monitoring and evaluation of service outcomes

May also include:

- advocating for the consumer and assisting him or her in locating and accessing services and supports.

Qualifications:

- must meet QMRP qualifications
- be free of any conflict of interest with other providers serving the consumer.

Oregon - Support Service Brokerage

The case managers continue approving services plans and have certain oversight and monitoring roles while the Support Services Brokerage agency (organization) has the responsibility to provide personal agents to assist individuals to:

- identify and plan needed support services
- find qualified providers to deliver the identified supports
- review with the individual the implementation of the plan of care
- identify, plan, access, arrange, and manage generic community resources and informal supports that meet the individual's support needs in accordance with the individual's choice as determined through a person-centered planning process.
- support the individual to identify and sustain a personal network of family, friends and associates
- gain access to waiver services, state plan services, medical, social and other services regardless of the funding source
- develop a personal budget that is based on the individual plan of care
- identify the supports necessary to insure the individual's health and safety
- write and review the implementation of the plan of care with the individual
- facilitate development and expansion of community resources and providers
- verifies providers are qualified to deliver waiver services
- conducts reviews of personal support agent activities and the delivery of plan of care services

Alabama - Community Specialist

The services of the community specialist will assist the consumer and his caregivers to design and implement specialized programs to enhance self-direction, independent living skills, community integration, social, leisure and recreational skills, and behavior management. A community specialist with expertise in person-centered planning may also be selected by the consumer to facilitate the interdisciplinary planning team meeting.

Responsibilities include:

- professional observation and assessment
- individualized program design and implementation
- training of consumers and family members
- consultation with caregivers and other agencies
- monitoring and evaluation of planning service outcomes
- may include advocating for the consumer and assisting him or her in locating and accessing services and supports.

Qualifications:

- must meet QMRP qualifications
- be free of any conflict of interest with other providers serving the consumer.

New Mexico - Community Access Coach

The Community Access Coach provides support for and facilitates community participation by the individual. The Community Access Coach also arranges or directly provides all enhancement options. The essential activity carried out by the coach is providing information and training to the child's natural supports to increase their knowledge and sensitivity. Natural Supports include the child's extended family and peers, as well as, other community members.

This service promotes access to community activities in which the individual or their family would typically participate.

The Coach will, at a minimum:

1. Support and assist the family in identifying their priorities and the outcomes expected of this service.
2. Identify or develop and sustain a network within the community to assist in implementing the allowable activities.
3. Identify, arrange for and effectively manage access to community resources and use of allowable activities.
4. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the service.
5. Report on the effectiveness of the service to the family, the case manager and other members of the IDT through reports (verbal and written) and participation in IDT meetings.
6. Community Access Coaching is also child-specific information sharing, consisting of:
 - (a) Gathering information about the child's development and medical needs, interests and goals of the child and family.
 - (b) Gathering information about the child's development and medical needs, interests and goals of the child and family.

- (c) Assisting families in identifying natural supports and in understanding their role.
- (d) Coaching natural supports about special precautions and considerations of the child's disability, medications, or other special concerns.
- (e) Coaching natural supports about special precautions and considerations of the child's disability, medications, or other special concerns.
- (f) Developing activities with natural supports that make personal and social goals possible.
- (g) Educating natural supports regarding the child's developmental status and behavior.
- (h) Monitoring the effectiveness of each enhancement option (outlined in the section below) in relation to the child's ISP goals.
- (i) The Community Access Coach, as a part of this service, may conduct developmental assessments. When used to support service planning and delivery; a developmental assessment should be conducted annually, reviewed at least every six months and updated as needed.

Colorado - Supported Living Consultant

Supported Living Consultation (SLC) (an agency) – if a participant chooses to receive this support, will provide a personal advisor (a SLC) to assist the individual to make choices in their day to day life in addition to service choices and arrangements. Most persons with developmental disabilities have limited experience in making choices in their lives and the SLC will provide advice and help them learn how to make choices.

- i. The SLC will be key to helping the individual to direct their supports and services. For example, the SLC participant will be offered a choice of providers for each Supported Living Services (SLS) service, but how do they make an informed choice between all these providers? The SLC could help them to interview people who are available to meet their personal care, household, community accessibility, therapy, day habilitation, and other needs. The SLC could help them compare and think about the pros and cons of the various providers available, perhaps talk to other consumers who these individuals work with, compare rates, and other factors to help the consumer to make an informed decision.
- ii. Unlike the case manager, the SLC is an optional service and each person's plan will be built to include the cost of this service to the degree that the participant wants an advisor to help to make informed decisions in his/her life.
- iii. Some individuals will need more assistance than others and as they learn, their need for assistance may diminish.
- iv. Individuals can select their SLCs who may be employees of Community Center Boards or other agencies, or who may be independent contractors if they meet the Department of Labor regulations.

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